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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>A.J.Ph.</i>	<i>The American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>A.J.S.L.L.</i>	<i>The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature</i>
<i>A.N.F.</i>	<i>Arkiv for Nordisk Filologi</i>
<i>A.S.N.S.L.</i>	<i>Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen</i>
<i>A.R.</i>	<i>Archivum Romanicum</i>
<i>B.H.</i>	<i>Bulletin Hispanique</i>
<i>C.J.</i>	<i>The Classical Journal</i>
<i>E.St.</i>	<i>Englische Studien</i>
<i>F.F.C.</i>	<i>Folklore Fellows Communications</i>
<i>G.R.M.</i>	<i>Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift</i>
<i>H.B.V.</i>	<i>Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde</i>
<i>J.A.F.</i>	<i>The Journal of American Folk-Lore</i>
<i>J.E.G.Ph.</i>	<i>The Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
<i>K.H.M.</i>	<i>Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm</i>
<i>Kl. Schr.</i>	<i>Kleinere Schriften</i>
<i>M.L.N.</i>	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
<i>M.L.R.</i>	<i>The Modern Language Review</i>
<i>M.Ph.</i>	<i>Modern Philology</i>
<i>M.S.G.V.</i>	<i>Mitteilungen der Schlesischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde</i>
<i>N.M.</i>	<i>Neuphilologische Mitteilungen</i>
<i>N.S.M.</i>	<i>Nuovi Studi Medievali</i>
<i>N.T.T.</i>	<i>Nieuw Theologisch Tijdschrift</i>
<i>P.M.L.A.</i>	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</i>
<i>R.C.</i>	<i>Revue Celtique</i>
<i>R.E.T.P.</i>	<i>Revue d'Ethnographie et des traditions populaires</i>
<i>R.H.</i>	<i>Revue Hispanique</i>
<i>Rh.M.</i>	<i>Rheinisches Museum für Philologie</i>
<i>R.L.C.</i>	<i>Revue de Littérature comparée</i>
<i>R.R.</i>	<i>The Romanic Review</i>
<i>R.T.P.</i>	<i>Revue des Traditions populaires</i>
<i>S.A.V.</i>	<i>Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde</i>
<i>S.S.N.</i>	<i>Scandinavian Studies and Notes</i>
<i>Z.D.A.</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum</i>
<i>Z.D.Ph.</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie</i>
<i>Z.F.S.L.</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur</i>
<i>Z.N.V.</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für niederdeutsche Volkskunde</i>
<i>Z.R.Ph.</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie</i>
<i>Z.R.W.V.</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für rheinische und westfälische Volkskunde</i>
<i>Z.V.V.</i>	<i>Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde</i>

CHAPTER XVI

MAGIC

THE basis of all science, the historical sciences no less than the natural ones, is logic, i.e. that faculty of the human mind which co-ordinates the phenomena of the outside world according to the rules of cause and effect. Hence it is that science ends where logic ends, and whatever is not amenable to the rules of logic falls outside the domain of science. Magic, too, is based upon logic, and in this respect at least it may well be regarded as something akin to science. Yet the logic upon which it rests is a faulty logic in that it finds causal relationships which upon more accurate observation are found to be non-existent. Magic is then a precursor of science in the sense that the logic on which it is built is a precursor of the logic which is at the base of all scientific work. Yet this does not mean that science is always and necessarily the successor of magic. On the contrary, both may exist side by side, not only in the same society (which would not be particularly miraculous) but even in the same mind, according as to whether it adopts a logic of rigorous fact or a logic of *assumed possibilities*, possibilities, that is, which cannot be proved but which can no more be disproved.

All magic may be divided into two categories according to the logic on which it rests. The first has been called sympathetic magic. Its logic assumes the continuance of a relationship that has in fact ceased. If, for example, the East African shepherds as well as the ancient Israelites refused to boil milk from fear that it might hurt the cow, no one can accuse them of a want of logic. Theirs is merely a faulty logic, i.e. they assume that because the milk was once part and parcel of the cow it still is so and that therefore any hurt done to the milk (such as heating it) would likewise hurt the cow.¹ Or, if a savage is careful to bury the clippings of his hair or the parings of his nails lest a witch get hold of them and through them work magic on him, he assumes that because hair and nails formed once a part

of his body they still do so, and any action exercised upon them would react upon his body. The second category has been called homoeopathic magic; its logic may be rendered by the Latin proverb *similia similibus*. If, for example, rain is desired, water is poured out, on the theory that such an action will produce a similar one. All magic actions may be reduced to one or other of these two principles.

When we pass from these theoretical considerations to the practical application of magic we shall be astounded by the wide diffusion of magic rites in all walks of life. Nor can there be any question of exhausting this immense domain. We must necessarily content ourselves with surveying the field and giving practical examples from among the living folk-lore of our day and a few references in the classics.²

Mention has already been made of the various rain-charms, all based upon homoeopathic magic. The simulation of a lightning storm as told of the ancient king Salmoneus is essentially of the same character.³ If peasant girls leap and dance when the flax is sown, the underlying idea is their wish that the flax should grow as high as they leap. If a man and a woman have sexual intercourse in the furrows of a newly ploughed field, it is hoped that the act in question will have the most beneficent effects upon the fertility of the field.⁴ The torch race, essentially an agricultural ceremony, is to have quickening effects upon the crops, from the quickening power of fire and the speed of the runners. To the last sheaf of corn, just because it is the last, are ascribed special powers; hence the necessity of preserving it for the seed-corn of the coming year, supposed to be fertilized by the contact.⁵

From the rites of the field to those of the peasant's homestead is not a far cry. His illnesses and those of his family and his cattle are cured by remedies designated as such not by medical science but by the logic of homoeopathic magic.⁶ If the remedy happens to have a real medical virtue, the utility of superstition is obvious; yet even when such is not the case, faith will achieve, if not miracles, at least a certain amount which it would be unwise to under-estimate in an age when more and more proof is forthcoming on the nature of psychic powers. Yet the same type of association will come out no less clearly in the various charms. These begin invariably with the statement that So-and-So (usually a god or a saint) did so-and-so, and just so the disease will be cured. This curious association of ideas has left a trace in numerous mediaeval invocations of the Christian deity. If Jehovah's great feats (as recorded in the Old Testament) are

enumerated in relative clauses, this is done chiefly in order to give him a gentle reminder to do the like on the present occasion.⁷

Nor are diseases the only calamities where magic proves useful. A raging fire may be arrested by magic means, usually the rite of a circumambulation accompanied, of course, by the murmuring or singing of charms. Numerous are the legends relating such attempts, often ending fatally for the bold charmer, since the flames, angry at being foiled (fire in primitive thought is considered an animate being), rush after him to destroy him, and his horse must be quick indeed to allow him to escape their wrath.⁸ Other charms are designed to rid a neighbourhood of noxious vermin, and the reader will easily recall the German legend of the Pied Piper of Hamelin.⁹ Nor is this all. Thieves may be caught by purely magic processes, witches may be discovered and foiled. On the other hand, harm may be dealt out to an enemy, and it is curious to note the close relationship between the ritual of a relatively high religion (such as Christianity) and the magic ritual of witch or wizard. As a matter of fact, certain sacraments such as communion and baptism, essentially magic in origin, are still regarded as such by many folk, and all the efforts of the Church to fill the old magical bottles with the new wine of an ethical doctrine and a higher conception of the deity have so far proved of little avail. In fact, it may be openly questioned whether, had Christianity deliberately suppressed this magical element (which it had in common with the other mystery religions of the Near East), it would have succeeded at all in winning over the masses of the dying Empire. Apart from such problems, Christian sacraments like the Mass are frequently distorted for magical and generally nefarious purposes, as are Christian prayers occasionally. I refer, for example, to the so-called Devil's Mass, recited, upon request, by unscrupulous clergymen of the Roman faith for the purpose of bringing about the discomfiture or death of one with whom the person ordering and paying for the 'Mass' is not on the friendliest terms. It goes without saying that the higher clergy and the authorities generally have always frowned upon such practices, which none the less are said to be flourishing still in parts of Southern Europe. Much the same in principle is the procedure by which magical effects are desired to come about by a recitation backwards of the Lord's prayer, a practice no less common in Protestant than in Catholic countries. The underlying idea that religious formulas, by being turned backward as it were, may have a nefarious effect, is sufficiently old. For example, the Roman form of marriage called *confarratio*, the old Patrician

form and itself not at all free from magical aspects, could not be dissolved by what we now call a divorce according to the civil law, but could be 'unspelled' by a ceremony called the *diffarreatio*; but the procedure was generally considered as of ill omen to the couple resorting to it.

The curious mixture of religion and magic opens up the problem of the mediaeval belief in witchcraft.¹⁰ When in the first part of the last century Jacob Grimm distinguished two currents which made up this particular domain of human madness, the heritage of paganism of the Teutonic type and Christian, i.e., in the last analysis, Oriental and Mediterranean, lore, he was perfectly right, and his analysis still stands as essentially sound. What must be borne in mind only is (1) that not all the cases of witchcraft recorded in Scandinavian sources are genuinely Teutonic; that on the contrary, we must reckon with a considerable influx of Celtic and Oriental (post-Christian) elements, and (2) that Grimm and many of his immediate successors had but a very imperfect knowledge of the various gnostic sects which continued to flourish, in spite of all persecutions, below the surface of mediaeval society. The belief in the nefarious powers of witches and wizards is of course considerably older and no doubt goes back into Indo-European times; witness the glowing hymn of hate in *Rigveda* VII, 104 and *Atharvaveda*, VIII, 4, invoking the gods Indra and Soma to bring about their destruction. In the following paragraphs I shall survey, very summarily, it is true, the most important and most interesting powers attributed to witches, old and new.

Among the most common is the ability to fly, a power shared by witches with the Olympian gods, the Christian angels, and various classes of the Hindoo lower demonology. Accordingly, the ordinary accusation brought against the mediaeval witches was that of having flown to the witches' sabbath, and when an English judge with a sense of humour remarked to an old woman who confessed her fault that there was no law against flying, that joke meant that the eighteenth century was near, though even so late as that 'enlightened' leaders like John Wesley solemnly proclaimed that giving up the belief in witchcraft meant giving up the Bible.

Intimately connected with this power is the ability to give life to inanimate objects, to make them serve a useful or harmful purpose. The story of the magician's apprentice, known from Lucian's *Philopseudes*, will come to mind at once. The mediaeval witches, riding on broomsticks or pitchforks, were equally proficient. In Northern Europe, among the Scandinavian people,

the mediaeval sources mention the peculiar institution of the 'sending', as it is called.¹¹ A witch will mark an inanimate object, a log or a bone, with runes and murmur certain charms. When thrown on the water the 'sending' will then on its own accord drift wherever it has been sent, even against the current, and bring harm to the party for whom it is destined. The *locus classicus* for this curious sort of witchcraft is the Icelandic *Grettis Saga*. The Scandinavians carried this practice to Greenland, where it is still known among certain Eskimo tribes, a good example of how elements of folk-lore migrate from people to people.

The Norse expression for magic and witchcraft was *seiðr*, a magician was a *seiðr-man* or wizard, and it is reported of the Norwegian king Harold Fairhair that he destroyed a large number of such magicians, though to be sure he was *not* a Christian, a warning that it is poor science to put the blame of witchcraft processes entirely on the churches and to condemn a stupid public opinion for nothing. The Norse *seiðr-man* and the *seiðkona* could make persons invisible by metamorphosis, and the old sagas are not lacking in stories of this type.¹² The magic mist, however, known by the more modern sagas, is not Norse or even Teutonic, but an importation of the druidical mist so common in the Irish sagas.

Even the magic music was not unknown in Scandinavia, and a few late sagas report how a wizard by his music made all animate and inanimate objects dance in the hall.¹³ But it must be admitted that this is an instance not so much of practical faith as of fiction, the motive in question being wellnigh ubiquitous.

The same difficulty, that of deciding whether a given motive is based upon fact or merely on fiction, exists for the Celtic material. We have of course no reason whatever to doubt the existence of magic practices in the Celtic countries; yet the source material is untrustworthy and needs careful sifting. The Irish sagas, essentially forms of fiction, have to be analysed and their facts checked up at every moment. What the historical sources report about the magical feats of the druids in their contest with Saint Patrick is too obviously modelled on the contest of Moses with the Egyptian magicians not to arouse the gravest suspicions. Considerably better material could be garnered to this day from Irish witches themselves, of whom there still exist a certain number in the western counties.

A vast number of banalities such as recur in practically every witchcraft process, e.g. the milking, by magic, of other people's cows, or the stealing, by magic, of their butter, their cream, their wheat, the casting of the 'evil eye' upon children and

cattle, the making of mice, rats, or other vermin, the production of hail-storms, etc., are of the widest diffusion and unquestionably pre-Christian, as they are bound up with no particular creed that may officially hold sway in a given country. The last witch burned in Hamburg, toward the end of the eighteenth century, was a servant girl who had bewitched the young master of the family so that he fell in love with her; but it is well known that this type of magic has not died out to this day and, let us hope, will not in the near future, especially as the penalty threatened by the law has, as in so many other cases, been considerably relaxed.

Divination may be, and often is, based upon magic, a fact which has undoubtedly strengthened the opposition of the church to that pseudo-science. As a matter of fact, from the times of the witch of Endor and the Thessalian witch of Lucan the distinction between a witch and a fortune-teller is of the most delicate. For example, it is difficult to say whether the Scandinavian woman who in the *Eiríks Saga rauða* foretells events to come¹⁴ to the Greenland colony, should be classed as a *völva* or rather as a *seidkona*. Probably she was both, for as the saga significantly adds, the events turned out as the woman had prophesied.

We must, further, regard as essentially magical certain spells and practices carried out for no particular harmful purpose, but which, often enough, turn against the imprudent person who engaged upon them. Among seafaring and fishing populations witches were (and probably still are) to be found who undertook to sell favourable wind in bags, very much after the manner of Aeolus when he wanted to help the wandering Odysseus. But, as in this classical instance, the gift sometimes turns out baneful to the mariner, usually because he disregards the rules which accompany the medicine. More gruesome still are certain stories, based undoubtedly on actual practice, though to be sure the dismal end was introduced to serve a moral purpose, where we hear of a girl who by spells brought her absent lover into her presence, or similarly conjured up her future husband. The tale ends with the statement that some time later the husband discovers that it was his wife who wrought the charm that caused him such unendurable suffering, and, as his remembrance comes back, he seizes a knife and stabs his fair partner, no doubt as a warning to others.

A piece of sympathetic magic of very wide diffusion is to be found in the so-called *envoûtement*. A witch secures a waxen image of the person to be harmed and then either stabs it or slowly melts it over a fire. As the image is thus destroyed, so

the man whom it represents will likewise sicken and die. The mediaeval *Gesta Romanorum*¹⁵ contains a famous story based upon this practice, here carried on by a disloyal wife and her lover. Yet it is by no means limited to fiction. The process brought against the Duchess of Gloucester, in the reign of Henry VI, which caused the downfall of her husband, bore on the same type of practices and the superstitions underlying them. Nay, the famous definition of high treason, now hopelessly antiquated yet still on the statute books, which speaks of 'imagining the king's death', has a peculiar flavour and forcibly recalls magic practices of this type.

Nor is an image or picture the only means to achieve such a nefarious end. Any part of the victim's body will suffice—as a rule, clippings of his hair or his nails; as Shakespeare puts it:

Some devils ask but the parings of one's nail,
A rush, a hair, a drop of blood, a pin,
A nut, a cherry-stone.

Hence the care certain peoples take of their nail-parings and their hair-clippings. Often enough, the mere foot-trace suffices. I cannot do better than quote from the famous Russian ballad of Dobrýnya the Dragon-slayer and Marína.¹⁶ The hero has scorned the advances of this Slavonic descendant of the ancient mother-goddess. Then

up sprang Marinushka, seized her dagger and hacked Dobrýnya's footsteps, flung them into an oven painted with many devices, and conjured them with a powerful incantation: 'Burn, ye footsteps of Dobrýnya, burn in this oven of many hues, and may his spirit likewise burn within him for me. As I cut these footsteps, may Dobrýnya's dear little heart cut for me.' Then worse than a sharp knife cut Dobrýnya's heroic heart. That evening he ate nothing, at midnight he slumbered not, and waited only for the white dawn. . . .

Nor does the connecting link between wizard and victim have to be of a material and physical nature. The very picture of the latter may suffice; hence the well-known aversion of savages to having their picture taken.¹⁷ Still more ethereal is the name, and the magic of the name is indeed numerous and important enough to fill a volume by itself.¹⁸ In primitive thought the practical identity of the name and its bearer is tacitly assumed, whence flows the wellnigh universal desire of savages to keep their names secret, lest a magician work on them mischief through his knowledge of their names. Equally common is the belief that the pronouncing of the name attracts the bearer, hence the reluctance to utter the name of a person deceased. A

god being by his very nature potentially in a position to work either good or harm, probably more harm than good, it became imperative not to call him without sufficient cause. More, by a knowledge of the god's name a wizard or enchanter might force the divinity to take a leading part in his own nefarious schemes to the detriment of others. Hence the common practice of keeping the name of the divinity a secret, a custom common among the ancient Egyptians, and hence the 'unutterable' name of Jahveh. The Romans, from a similar motive, kept the name of the guardian deity of their city a profound secret, lest the enemies of the republic should entice and lure him away. The same taboo extends to the names of harmful and dangerous animals, as we have seen in a previous chapter, and also to the names of diseases and death, hence the French *le beau mal* or *le bon mal*, Italian *il male maestro*, *il male santo* for epilepsy; hence the designation of *les malades* or *les chrétiens* for the lepers in the Middle Ages; hence also the numerous circumlocutions for 'death' and 'to die', all consequences of notions centuries and perhaps millennia older than Mrs. Baker Eddy.

A curse, to be effective, must be attached to the name of the cursed, which means that the curser must at least know the name of the victim. Hence Sigurd's refusal to give his name to the dying Fafnir, hence also the belief in what the Germans call *Totnennung*. A hero is invulnerable, according to this notion, until his name is called out. The *locus classicus* for this belief is the Norse *Hamðismál*.¹⁹ The underlying reason seems to be the following. It is well known that persons in a trance, such as the Norse Berserker, are practically insensible to hurts, and cases are known of modern fakirs, gashing themselves with knives without losing a drop of blood. But it is a no less well attested fact that the minute such a person is called by his name he wakes up from his trance, and at the same time loses the superhuman powers in question. An imperfect knowledge of psychic states of this nature would no doubt lead to an exaggerated importance being given to the name.

It would be erroneous, however, to assume that the magic act alone suffices to bring about the desired result. On the contrary, most magic acts are accompanied by words, usually a magic song. The very etymology of the word group derived from Latin *incantare* testifies to this state of affairs, and it is significant that the Old Norse word *galdr*, pl. *galdrar*; meaning charm, is derived from the verb *gala*, 'to sing', familiar to English readers from the word *nightingale*.

The magic song may be replaced by a mere formula usually

murmured with a low voice, or, in Scandinavia, by runes.²⁰ The latter are of course engraved where they are supposed to be most effective. Thus certain runes engraved on a sword will make the weapon unbreakable or give it victory. Runes engraved on objects and placed under the bed will produce illness or death. That place, as well as the threshold, is generally considered as most favourable for all sorts of charms, and the story *Sapientes* of the *Seven Sages of Rome* relates how Merlin discovers such a charm under the monarch's bed, placed there by the wicked councillors.²¹ In the *Egils Saga Skallgrímssonar* the fatal runes are found under the patient's pillow. The Norse motive of the 'sleeping thorn', known from the legend of the disobedient Valkyrie, is no doubt likewise based upon a rune charm.

The workers of charms may be of either sex, and accordingly we find wizards no less than witches, though the latter almost everywhere by far outnumber the former. At the bottom of this peculiarity is no doubt the natural awe which surrounds woman in all savage societies, but also the greater power of intuition and instinct of the fair sex. The persecution of women as witches is by no means peculiar to the Christian Middle Ages. On the contrary, we have analogues in Roman and Celtic antiquity.²² The Thessalian witches will also come to the reader's mind, as will the memorable passage where Tacitus speaks of the high regard in which woman was held in ancient Teutonic society. That regard had of course nothing to do with ideas of chivalry but was simply an outgrowth of the primitive awe of the supernatural powers of woman. Nor is there any basis for the assumption that witches were necessarily *old* women. Even a superficial perusal of the Mediaeval witchcraft processes will soon convince any one of the contrary. The last witch burned in Hamburg was a young servant girl, and Joan of Arc is perhaps a still better example. The Norse *seiðkona* of the *Eiríks Saga rauða* was certainly no old hag, and the Christian woman who is finally prevailed upon to sing the old magic songs does not appear to be particularly old either.

Wherever magic was practised, and that means of course all over the earth, the motive of the fight between two magicians or two groups of magicians became a favourite one.²³ Accordingly, we find in the *Arabian Nights* the tale of the struggle of two witches, a 'white' one and a 'black' one, the former disenchanting the man who had been converted into an animal by the latter. We have further the widespread tale of the magician's apprentice who finally outwits his master and brings about his death. In Scandinavia, finally, we hear how the Danish king Harald Gorms-

son sends a magician to Iceland to spy out the conditions of the island, how this magician assumes the shape of a whale and how he is foiled by four Icelandic magicians, who by their charms make his landing impossible.

The magician more often than not had to prepare himself for his particular task, sometimes by fasting, sometimes by observing a special diet. Thus the *spákona* of the *Eiríks Saga* is given the hearts of various animals, the underlying idea being, that by eating the heart of an animal the real or supposed qualities of the animal would pass to the eater. The various injunctions respecting sexual continence or the abstinence from alcoholic liquors, imposed upon certain priesthoods, have of course a magic root; and it is to be suspected that the Italian mobs of the eleventh century who so powerfully aided Gregory VII in carrying out his reforms in the matter of the celibacy of the priests were actuated far less by the utilitarian and political principles largely responsible for this measure than by a curious revival of beliefs in the magic power of virginity.

The connexion of priesthood and magic is evident almost everywhere; it survives in the powers attributed to Roman priests to this day, even among Protestant populations. If in modern societies the priest may at best be regarded as a man whose intercession with the deity is of an especial weight, in more primitive social groups he appears rather as a man who by certain words and acts best known to himself may force the deity to do his will. Nor is there any need to descend to fairly barbaric societies to meet with such conceptions. Even among the post-exilic Jews there were rabbis who were said to force Jahveh or who attempted to do so. After all, the dividing line between prayer and charm is sometimes a very slender one, and one need not be a determinist to make out a good case for a theory that the prayer is but a higher evolutionary stage of the magic charm. The relationship is particularly close between the magic and the religious sacrifice, so much so, in fact, that we may reasonably assume that the latter is but a modification of the former. At all events, it would be a grave methodological error to regard the sacrifice which is still obligatory for certain magical actions, a black cat or a black rooster given to the Devil, particularly common in treasure legends, as a degenerate form of the pre-Christian sacrifice of the natural religions. The error would be of the same type as the very common assumption that the various European *patois* are degenerate forms of the literary language. To my mind such considerations would dispose once for all of the assumption that the *do ut des* idea must be thought of as at the basis of sacri-

fice, and Robertson Smith ²⁴ was right at least in his discovery of the magic root of all sacrifice, though one may of course justly doubt his theories touching the importance of the totemic idea.

The magician and witch, such as they still live in fairy tale and legend, are unthinkable without their magic staffs.²⁵ From the Homeric Kirke and the Moses of *Exodus* to the Norse *spákona* and the witch in *Hänsel und Gretel* the magic staff is the one necessary implement of all adepts of witchcraft, and if the Hellenic Hermes is provided with a staff, there is no doubt a similar idea at the bottom. But what exactly was this idea? In the almost complete absence of discussions I venture to propose a connexion between the magic staff and the divining rod. That is, certain psychic properties of human individuals, though altogether independent of the rod or the staff, will show themselves to greater advantage if the right hand is at the same time equipped with such an implement. This fact led to the erroneous idea that the rod or staff itself had the powers which were really inherent in the wizard or witch, as for example the ability to discover hidden water. By an extension of thought the magic staff, the *baguette*, ended up by becoming the chief tool of wizard, witch, and priest-king. The sceptre or sway, at all events, cannot for a moment be regarded as a substitute for a sword or other weapon; it is purely and simply the magic staff of the priest-king.

There is no need in this book to rehearse the brilliant and altogether probable theory of the magic origins of the kingship. That task has been accomplished by the greatest of modern folklorists, a scholar whose breadth of vision and critical acumen are matched only by the admirable and almost unsurpassable skill with which he wields that flexible and yet so difficult tool, our common mother-tongue, and by his all-embracing human sympathy and kindly generosity. His work, though rooted in the tradition of the Anthropological School, is yet so universal that it may properly be said to belong to no school in particular, and by comparison with its great scope and philosophical depth all criticism of detail, even where justified, must of necessity appear small and trifling. Yet it may be well to point out in passing that the profession of king, which has latterly somewhat fallen in the general public esteem, at least on the European continent, is by no means the only one whose roots must be sought in magic and about which there has always hung a ghostly atmosphere. Another such profession is that of the blacksmith, whose craft still is, in Africa for example, feared as something uncanny and savouring of magic. In Europe we have altogether a considerable body of tradition pointing in the same direction; the names of

Hephaistos and Wayland as well as that of the Celtic Goibniu will readily come to mind. The common awe of molten metal, mysterious to the primitive, was no doubt strengthened by the fact that the smith's calling seems practically never to have been exercised by a member of the clan but always by outsiders, wandering tradesmen of foreign speech and habits, keeping strictly for themselves the secrets of their profession.²⁶ Down to the time of the Renaissance blacksmiths would practise medicine, and the Italian story-teller Franco Sacchetti relates a wholly authentic anecdote showing a smith in the rôle of a dentist. At an even later period smiths were found cauterizing wounds, and it is to be suspected that if the smith of Gretna Green usurped certain spiritual functions, his procedure was in fact far less revolutionary than might at first sight appear to have been the case.

If the blacksmith's craft, essentially a man's craft, has always had a magic flavour, it yet finds a pretty close parallel among the professions mainly, if not exclusively, exercised by women. I refer to the activity of spinning and weaving. Numerous are the phrases, in all European languages, which are reminiscent of the magic of weaving. Suffice it to recall the etymology of Anglo-Saxon *wyrd*, Old High German *Wurt*, meaning 'fate', 'death', connected with Dutch *wortelen* (indicating the movement of the spindle) and derived from the same Indo-European root as Latin *vertere*. The Greek Moirai no less than the Norse Norns were thought to spin the fates of men, and the Anglo-Saxon *freoduwebbe* and the Dutch *oorlog* point in much the same direction.²⁷

Essentially magic is the curious notion that a wound can only or best be healed by the person who struck it, a notion at the base of the ancient Greek story of Telephos and Achilles and the Mediaeval legend of Tristan who goes to the country of the Morholt to be cured of the wound which the latter had struck him. To this is related the even more curious belief that a second blow will do away with the effects of the first, hence the command, found in many stories both Oriental and Occidental, to strike but one blow, since at the second stroke the ogre or other monster would gain new strength and inevitably slay the hero.²⁸ Translated into more prosaic language, the notion recommends cutting off a tuft of hair from a mad dog that bit a person and applying it to the wound.²⁹

Magic, i.e. the false logic repudiated by modern man in the light of modern experience, has unquestionably played, in man's past, the rôle we like to attribute to the true logic, based upon observation and inference, of modern science, in modern life. In

this respect at least magic may be considered as the precursor of the natural sciences. Yet it is well to bear in mind one important limitation holding good for the true logic no less than for the false one, and that is, that at no time has man been swayed exclusively or even preponderantly by logical considerations, true or false. Sentiment has always had the upper hand, or else it would be inconceivable that, as Sir James G. Frazer himself admits, human history should have been little more than a long series of crime and folly. In view of that experience I am inclined to attribute to the precursor of modern logic on the whole as modest a place as that now held by logic, mayhap even a more modest one. It cannot be the object of the present book to point out how often magic has been the vehicle of ambitious men and their schemes toward self-aggrandisement. The harm done would at all events be negligible when compared with the infinitely greater harm wrought at all times by unreasoning fanaticism, a fanaticism swayed by no logic, true or false. And even the instances where, as intimated above, magic did serve the ulterior purposes of ambitious men, can be matched by as many instances showing how the successor of magic, modern science, has been misused in no other manner and with no less nefarious results. In fact, there is certainly reason to voice the apprehension that human nature has not changed enough, in the course of the centuries, to preclude a danger of modern science becoming, in this respect, a worse tyrant than magic and religion put together. They all need, as a balance, as it were, ordinary sound common sense, the common sense of a Voltaire and an Andrew Lang, which recent events have shown to be a virtue even more rare than learning.

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¹ Sir J. G. Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, London, 1918, III, III sqq.

² Cf. also the excellent little booklet of the late Ernst Samter, *Volkskunde im altsprachlichen Unterricht*, Berlin, 1923.

³ Frazer, *Magic Art*, I, 310.

⁴ *R.H.*, LVI, 265 sqq.

⁵ Sir J. G. Frazer, *Spirits of the Corn and the Wild*, London, 1914.

⁶ This opens up the vast domain of Folk-Medicine, which I cannot here discuss more at length, at least beyond what has been said on the subject

in connexion with plant lore. The reader will find useful indications in the following works: Fanny Bergen, *Animal and Plant Lore*, Boston, 1899, pp. 68 sqq.; E. Stemplinger, *Antike und moderne Volksmedizin*, Leipzig, 1925 (*Das Erbe der Alten*, Heft 10); W. C. Black, *Folk-Medicines*, London, 1883.

⁷ Cf. F. Heiler, *Das Gebet*,⁵ München, 1923.

⁸ The most recent study unfortunately published in an inaccessible place: Becker, *Die Sage vom Feuerreiter*, in *Jahrbuch d. Vereins f. mecklenburgische Geschichte u. Altertumskunde*, LXXXI, 1. The reader may also recall the beautiful ballad of E. Mörike, *Der Feuerreiter*.

⁹ F. Meissel, *Die Sage vom Rattenfänger von Hameln*⁴, Hameln, 1924.

¹⁰ Cf. Walter Scott, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, London, 1830. J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, II⁴, 868 sqq.; III⁴, 303 sqq.

¹¹ G. E. J. Powell and E. Magnússon, *Icelandic Legends*, London, 1864-6, II, lxxiv sqq.; xcix; K. Maurer, *Isländische Volksmärchen der Gegenwart*, Leipzig, 1860, pp. 76 sqq., 95, 99, 111, 135, 140; S.S.N., IX, 186; Paul Sock, *Eskimomärchen*, Berlin, s.d., p. 79.

¹² On the whole subject cf. H. Gering, *Ueber Weissagung und Zauber im nordischen Altertum*, Kiel, 1902.

¹³ Cf. S. Bugge, *Harpens Kraft*, A.N.F., VII (1891), pp. 97 sqq.; further: C.J., XXI, 21-8; N.M., XXIX, 254 sq.

¹⁴ Ed. G. Storm, p. 14 sq.; cf. Gering, *op. cit.*, p. 25, n. 16.

¹⁵ Ed. Oesterley, p. 428, cf. also p. 727. For a strikingly similar Scandinavian story, cf. B. Thorpe, *Northern Mythology*, London, 1851-2, II, 55.

¹⁶ Balor, p. 47.

¹⁷ R. Andree, *Ethnographische Parallelen und Vergleiche*, II (1889), pp. 18 sqq.

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¹⁹ O. L. Jiriczek, *Deutsche Heldensagen*, I, Strassburg, 1898, p. 93.

²⁰ S. Feist, A.N.F., XXXV, 243-87. What is true for runes holds also for the alphabets; cf. F. Dornseiff, *Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie*², Leipzig, 1925.

²¹ A.R., VIII, 406.

²² Salomon Reinach, *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*, III (1913), p. 258; R.C., XLIV, 374-80.

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²⁸ R.E.T.P., VI, 432 sqq.

²⁹ E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, 84.